

POTTER (W<sup>m</sup> W.)

*Reminiscences of field-hospital  
service with the army of the Potomac —*

Field Hospital Service  
with  
The Army of the Potomac.

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POTTER.



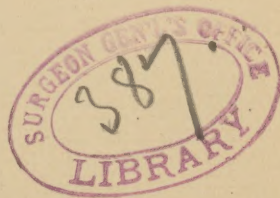


Reminiscences  
OF  
Field-Hospital Service

WITH THE  
Army of the Potomac.

BY  
WILLIAM WARREN POTTER, M. D.,

Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel United States Volunteers ; Surgeon in Charge First Division Field  
Hospital, Second Army Corps ; Surgeon Fifty-seventh Regiment, New York Volunteers ;  
Assistant Surgeon Forty-ninth Regiment, New York Volunteers ; Recorder Second  
Division Hospital in Sixth Army Corps, etc., etc.



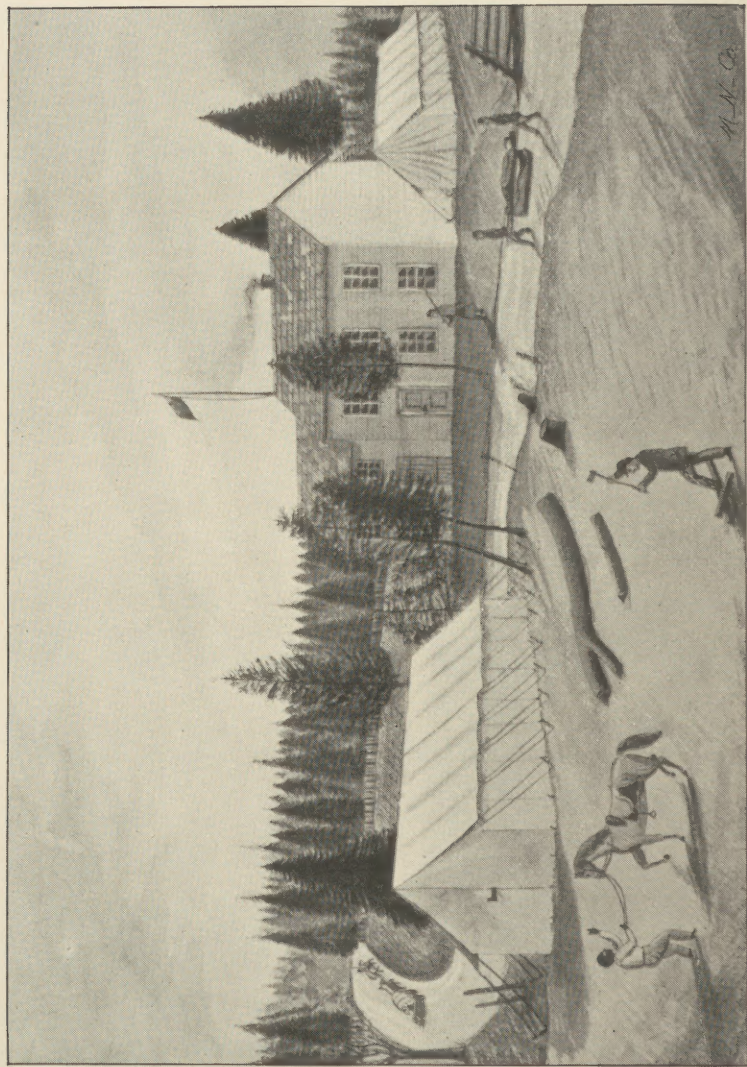
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REGIMENTAL HOSPITAL 49TH REGIMENT N. Y. VOLUNTEERS, CAMP GRIFFIN, VA., NOVEMBER, 1861, TO MARCH, 1862. ASSISTANT-SURGEON W. W. POTTER, IN CHARGE. FROM A SKETCH MADE BY A SOLDIER, DECEMBER, 1861, AND PRESENTED TO THE AUTHOR.—W. W. P.



# Reminiscences of Field-Hospital Service with the Army of the Potomac.

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It is the purpose of the writer in these pages, kindly allotted to the consideration of this interesting phase of army life, to give a succinct account of the field-hospital system of the Army of the Potomac, based upon his experiences of three years' service as a medical officer in that army. Minute detail cannot, of course, be entered into within the necessarily narrow limits of a magazine article,—only distinctive features grouped and portrayed in outline.

If it were necessary to seek a *raison d'être* for the appearance of such an article at this time, when so much is being written about the war and its conduct, it could readily be found in the fact that, so far, only officers of the line have figured in conspicuous prominence, as having achieved renown in the military service. It is an undeniable fact that the medical department of the army was very near the hearts of the millions of patriotic people who, while compelled to remain at home, contributed, with lavish hands, their means and substance toward the successful prosecution of the war. It is presumed that many of these will be interested to know something more of the manner of caring for the sick and wounded, in active service and on the field, than can be gleaned from ordinary or even official sources.

The writer served in the various capacities of Assistant Surgeon, and Surgeon on duty with the troops, and as Recorder of the Second Division Hospital, in the Sixth Army Corps; also, as assistant to Chief Operator, as Chief Operator, and as Surgeon-in-Charge of a division field hospital in the Second Army Corps, holding the latter place for more than a year. This statement is made that his opportunities for knowledge as to the working of the system may be understood, and the value of his judgment thereupon properly estimated.

An army in the field is, at once, confronted with the difficult problem of properly caring for its sick and wounded,—a question second only in importance to the ever-present one of feeding it. The difficulties increase in a manifold degree if, as was chiefly the case with the Army of the Potomac, the field of operations lies in an enemy's country. Military reasons demand that disabled soldiers

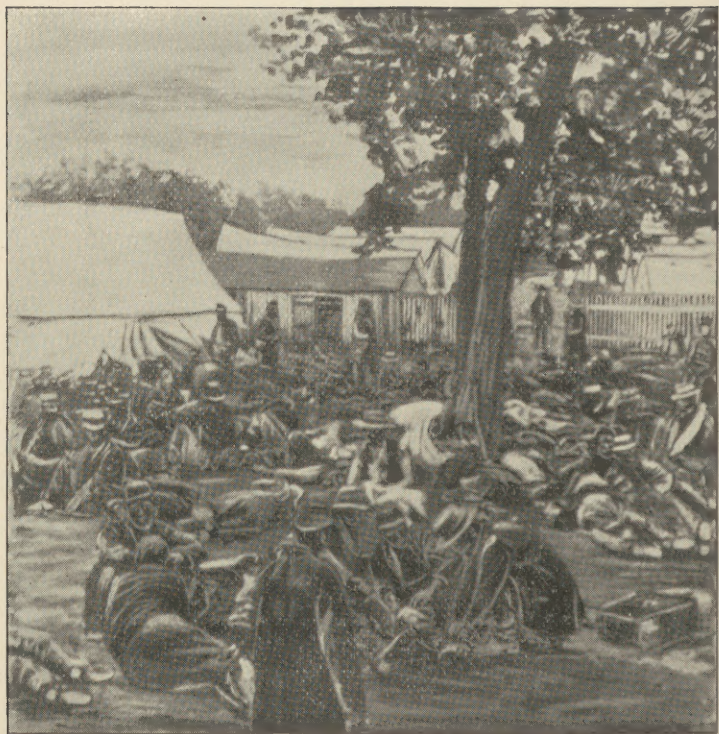
shall not impede the mobility of the columns; humane reasons insist, with equally cogent force, that they shall receive prompt and efficient care, and these with due regard to economy of life and limb. It is affirmed, without the hazard of successful challenge, that both these grave considerations were met during the late civil war, by the medical staff of the army, with a skill and patriotic devotion to duty, alike worthy the profession and the cause.

In the old army, *i. e.*, the army as it existed prior to the war of 1861-5, the Regimental Hospital was the only field-hospital recognized or provided for in the 'army regulations.' During the Autumn of 1861, and the Winter of 1862, this plan was still adhered to. The sick, who could not be properly treated in quarters, were, by order of the Surgeon, sent to the Regimental Hospital, which was conveniently located near, and, indeed, formed part of the camp. To provide therefor, each regiment was allowed three hospital tents, one Sibley tent, and one "A" tent. The hospital tents, each measuring 14x16 feet area measure, were usually pitched one behind another, so that they formed three communicating apartments. The other tents were used by the attendants, and also for kitchen purposes. When the capacity of this hospital became overtaxed, the surplus was sent to General Hospital in Washington. Sometimes it was expedient as well as convenient to locate the regimental hospitals in or near dwelling-houses that had been vacated by their owners or occupants, and abandoned to the tender consideration of the Union forces. Our illustration shows an example of such utilization of a deserted house for hospital conveniences by the 49th Regiment, N. Y. Volunteers. The hospital here shown was situate about half a mile in rear of the troops, on a road leading through Camp Griffin to Chain Bridge. This hospital was in operation on the spot depicted from the Autumn of 1861 to March 8, 1862. It is from an India ink sketch, drawn and presented to me by a member of Co. B, whose name I have forgotten.

In the Spring of 1862, when the army was moved to the Peninsula, and it became necessary, in order to properly mobilize it for the field, to reduce the baggage and camp equipage to the minimum, each regiment was allowed but one hospital tent. Depot hospitals were, however, on our arrival at the new line of operations, established at the army base, for the reception of the sick in excess of the regimental accommodations. During the siege of Yorktown, conveniences of a like character were provided at Ship Point and at Old Point Comfort. While the army was before Richmond in May and June, 1862, large field-hospitals were established at Savage's Station and at White House; and their capacity was taxed to the uttermost, in the care of the sick and wounded during that portion of the Peninsular campaign.







FIELD HOSPITAL AT SAVAGE'S STATION, VA., JUNE, 1862, SHOWING THE RECEP-  
TION AND FIRST CARE OF THE WOUNDED FROM THE BATTLES OF ELLER-  
SON'S AND GAINES'S MILLS. FROM A PHOTOGRAPH IN POSSESSION  
OF THE AUTHOR SINCE 1862.—W. W. P.

At Savage's Station were collected the wounded from the battles of Ellerson's and Gaines's Mills, numbering over 2,000 men.<sup>1</sup> In the movement to Harrison's Landing it was found impracticable to remove this hospital, and it was, therefore, left to fall into the enemy's hands. It was liberally supplied with surgeons, nurses, stores, and rations, and everything done for the comfort of its inmates which the exigencies of the service permitted. On Sunday, June 29th, at or about five o'clock P. M., the Confederates, under General Magruder, appeared in force in the vicinity of this hospital, approaching both along the railroad and the Williamsburg road. A vigorous attack was made upon a portion of the second corps, which was drawn up in line on the open field south of the hospital, facing west. A formidable railroad battery at once opened fire, the first shell exploding directly over the hospital, which was in direct range of the fire. Other shots quickly followed, with the effect of killing one man and wounding others in the hospital, destroying some of the tents, and causing much dismay among the already suffering inmates. The hospital also contained a number of Confederate wounded, among whom was Colonel Lamar, of the Eighth Georgia Regiment. A flag of truce was immediately sent out by the surgeon in charge, notifying the commanding officer of the Confederate force which made the attack on the hospital, that it was suffering from the fire of his batteries, and that some of his own men were likely to be among the victims. The following reply was returned:

The hospital will not be fired into unless undue advantage is taken of its flag.

(Signed)

A. CONRAD,

*A. A. Gen'l, Confed. Forces.*

The division of General William F. (Baldy) Smith, in which I was then serving, had moved on the road toward White Oak Swamp a short time previous to the commencement of the engagement, which was known as the Battle of Savage's Station. But as soon as it was ascertained that the enemy had appeared in force and was making determined effort, General Smith countermarched his division and, on reaching the field, threw it in on the left of Sumner's Corps, where the fighting was spirited and considerable loss was sustained, chiefly by the Vermont Brigade under General Brooks. Night soon came on, however, and quickly put an end to the action, excepting some desultory firing that was continued until a later hour.

1. For other illustrations of this hospital, see the *Century Magazine* for July, 1885, pp. 459-461. From the various battle-fields during the "seven days" fighting, the number in this hospital was increased to about 3,000.—W. W. P.



Smith's wounded were collected at a small house and shop about a mile down the Williamsburg road, toward White Oak Swamp, where there was a little opening of a few acres in the woods.

About nine o'clock P. M., while I was busily engaged in caring for these wounded, Dr. J. B. Brown, Medical Director of the Sixth Corps, called me aside, stating that he had orders from General Franklin to leave the wounded where they were, with medical officers and nurses, and that I had been selected to remain behind with them. He stated, furthermore, that all our forces would pass by before midnight, moving toward White Oak Swamp, and that I had better make such arrangements, at once, as would enable me to comply with the order; whereupon my horses were despatched with the troops to avoid capture, and hastily collecting such hospital supplies as were available, I once more addressed myself to the care of the wounded. By midnight, or a little after, the retreating columns had all passed by<sup>1</sup> on their way to White Oak Swamp, where the conflict was to be renewed on the morrow, with all the fierceness of its deadly energy.

The consciousness of being between the lines with the certainty of falling into the enemy's hands in the morning, together with the pressing duties of the hour, were sufficient to counteract the fatigues that otherwise would have speedily brought that much-needed repose, which I vainly sought about two o'clock in the morning. Soon after dawn the Rebel skirmishers appeared slowly advancing through the woods, coming to a halt on a line with the hospital. Some officers immediately rode up who were informed of the condition of affairs, but before the conversation was ended, General "Stonewall" Jackson himself appeared upon the scene. Upon application he ordered a guard, consisting of a sergeant and twelve men, for the purpose of protecting the hospital during the passing of his columns; and, after ascertaining the facts as to our authority for being there, gave the order for his line to advance. All day long the steady tramp of the foe made unwelcome music to our ears. They were a cheerful lot, flushed with what they delusively supposed was victory of a decisive nature; their uniforms (?) were tattered, but their muskets were bright; and their cannon, chiefly marked "U. S.", were, for the most part, drawn with rope traces.

Some time during the forenoon the head of General D. H. Hill's division halted in front of the hospital, and from him a pass was obtained which authorized me to visit the battle-field of the evening before, for the purpose of ascertaining if any of the wounded had been overlooked. This I did in the afternoon accompanied by one of the guards, and met on the field a Confederate ambulance squad in

1. Excepting a battery of artillery inadvertently left behind, and which thundered down the road to White Oak Swamp at early dawn.—W. W. P.

charge of a sergeant, already engaged in the same duty. A few wounded were found in the woods on the left, and I also counted about seventy Union dead, most of which lay in the opening through which the Williamsburg road passes out into the open field.<sup>1</sup>

On Tuesday, July 1st, the wounded left in my care were moved up to the main hospital at Savage's Station, and distributed to its wards. The guns of Malvern Hill were distinctly heard during the entire afternoon, and the cheering news of the enemy's defeat soon reached our ears. Two weeks later a train-load of wounded, on flat cars, was moved into Richmond, and I accompanied them. We arrived late in the evening and, owing to some mismanagement in regard to the arrival of the ambulances, were compelled to remain at the station all night. Next morning the wounded were distributed to the buildings then used for hospital purposes, and the medical officers were sent to Libby prison, then also using as a hospital. I was directed to report to the commandant, Lieutenant Turner, who ordered a search of my person, ostensibly to ascertain if I had in possession any counterfeit Confederate money. Not finding any, he contented himself with seizing my pocket case of surgical instruments, which he regarded as contraband of war, casting a longing eye upon some gold coin which I happened fortunately to have, but which he dare not take. I was assigned to the care of Union wounded in a large tobacco warehouse on Cary street, about four blocks east of Libby, and continued upon that duty until my release, which happily occurred in a very few days.

Richmond was, at this time, one vast hospital. Every building that could possibly be made to serve the purpose was filled with wounded, either Union or Confederate. These buildings were, for the most part, tobacco warehouses, and were devoid of any of the proper conveniences pertaining to hospital service. The Union wounded lay upon bare floors with, possibly in some instances, a blanket underneath and a knapsack for a pillow. The air was hot and stifling, saturated with the sickening odor of stale tobacco, and altogether it was a most uncomfortable state of affairs. However, I saw no disposition to treat any of our wounded with unkindness, and presumed the authorities were doing the best they could with the resources at their command.

One day, not long after entering upon duty at this hospital, acting upon the suggestion of Assistant Surgeon J. Sim Smith, U.S.A., a fellow prisoner,<sup>2</sup> I obtained a pass from Lieutenant Turner to visit the officers'

1. See plan of the battle of Savage's Station in the *Century* for July, 1885, p. 460—W. W. P.

2. Since deceased.—W. W. P.

prison on Eighteenth street, where some of my acquaintances whom I was desirous of seeing were incarcerated. This prison was also a large tobacco warehouse and contained several hundred officers, among whom were Generals McCall and Reynolds, the former captured at the battle of Glendale, June 30th, and the latter at Gaines's Mill, June 27th. At the solicitation of my friends, Captain McLean, 5th U. S. Cavalry, and Captain Theodore B. Hamilton, 33d N. Y. Volunteers, I remained all night as their guest; and on my return to Libby next morning, to my surprise I found a train of ambulances loaded and ready to start for Aiken's Landing with wounded for exchange. I immediately applied to Dr. Cullen,<sup>1</sup> Longstreet's medical director, who had charge of the matter, for permission to accompany the train. This he readily granted and, mounting the nearest ambulance, I rode with the driver to Aiken's Landing on the James River, a distance of about ten miles from Richmond. Here we were delivered to the hospital steamer "Louisiana," Lieutenant-Colonel Sweitzer, of General McClellan's staff, truce officer in charge, and reached Harrison's Landing next morning in safety; having, however, anchored in the river near the point of embarkation for the night, to avoid the danger of fire from the enemy's shore batteries, as our flag would not protect us after dark. This was the first transaction of exchange under the cartel, just then concluded between the commissioners, Major-General John A. Dix for the United States, and Colonel Robert Ould for the Confederate authorities.

General McClellan boarded the "Louisiana" by steam launch soon after we anchored off Harrison's bar, and spent nearly an hour in close conversation with Major Clitz and Captain Chambless, two regular army officers wounded at Gaines's Mill, and who were lying upon cots in the saloon of the vessel. General J. E. B. Stuart, the famous Confederate trooper, paid several visits to these officers while they were quartered in Libby, sitting between their cots which were contiguous to each other, and passing a few moments of apparently pleasant conversation with them at each visit. The medical officers and nurses who were fit for duty here rejoined their respective commands, and the "Louisiana" proceeded on her way with the wounded to northern hospitals.

About this time an important change took place in the administrative head of the medical department of the Army of the Potomac. Surgeon Charles S. Tripler, U. S. A., a most able and accomplished officer, who, from the accession of McClellan, had performed the

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<sup>1</sup>. I had met Dr. Cullen at Williamsburg in May, when he was sent into our lines by Longstreet to look after his wounded.—W. W. P.



duties of medical director, was nominated by the President to be medical inspector-general of the United States Army; and Surgeon Jonathan Letterman, U. S. A., was appointed to the vacancy occasioned by this promotion. Dr. Tripler's experience had been wide, and his training of such a nature as well suited him to the responsibilities of the office he had so long and admirably filled; but the difficulties to overcome had been many and various, and while the campaign just ended had taxed his energy and capacity to their uttermost, it had yet left as a heritage other and newer experiences, as well as a trained medical staff,—resources of inestimable value to be drawn upon by his successor.

These experiences had demonstrated the inadequacy of the regimental hospital system, as well as the defectiveness of the brigade hospitals which were tried for a time, to meet the necessities of military operations conducted on so large a scale as now, where the marches were so long and arduous, and the fighting so terrible and bloody. The new medical director addressed himself almost at once to the solution of the difficult problems of providing a comprehensive field-hospital system, which should be adequate to the great exigencies of the military operations of so vast an army, and a disciplined ambulance service as well, which should be competent to promptly and efficiently transport the sick and wounded, both on the march and in battle. Orders were promulgated on August 24, 1862, on the subject of the ambulance corps, and on October 30, 1862, in relation to field hospitals; and so complete were the plans set forth in these orders in all their details, that they remained in force without material change, until the end of the war. Moreover, their provisions were subsequently adopted by the Surgeon-General, and made the uniform practice throughout all the armies in the field.

Briefly summarized, these plans were as follows: Each division hospital was to organize with a staff, consisting of one surgeon in charge; one assistant surgeon as recorder; one assistant surgeon to provide food and shelter; three medical officers to perform operations, each operator to have three assistants; and additional medical officers, according to necessity, to attend the wards, dress wounds, etc. There were also one chief hospital steward, one chief cook, one ward master, and a few nurses attached to the permanent organization. Extra hospital stewards, cooks, nurses, and other attendants were to be detailed for duty as occasion required. On the march, or in camp, the extra medical officers, hospital stewards, cooks, nurses, and attendants remained with their respective regiments; only the permanent staff was constantly on duty at the hospitals, or accompanied the ambulance trains.

The ambulances were organized into division trains with a first lieutenant in command, and second lieutenants from each brigade as assistants; the entire trains of each corps being commanded by a captain attached to the corps commander's staff. A sufficient number of enlisted men were detailed from the ranks to properly man the trains of each division, in the proportion of two men and a driver to each ambulance, and a mounted sergeant from each regiment.<sup>1</sup> A medicine wagon, properly supplied with stimulants, dressings, and medicines for each brigade, also formed a part of the division field-hospital equipment. Each division train was provided with a saddler, a blacksmith, and a traveling forge, to keep the train in order: and each ambulance was supplied with stretchers, buckets, kettles, lanterns, beef stock, bed-sacks, and kitchen utensils.

This is but a faint setting forth of the great labor and multifarious details which such a comprehensive plan involved, and, whereas in July the young medical director of the Army of the Potomac came into office finding a medical department somewhat disorganized and chaotic, by the end of October he had gathered around him an amply equipped and thoroughly drilled hospital staff, as well as a trained, organized, and efficient ambulance corps, adequate to meet the pressing necessities of the great army in its self-imposed Herculean labor.

As soon as a battle became imminent, the medical director of the corps ordered the establishment of a hospital for each division of the corps, in positions selected by himself convenient to the troops, yet sufficiently out of range of fire to insure comparative safety. Houses were, when available, chosen for these hospital sites, the adjacent grounds usually affording conveniences for pitching the tents, obtaining water, and other supplies for the comfort of the wounded. The wagons were ordered up at once, the hospital staff repaired to the site selected, and, under the superintendence of the surgeon in charge, prepared the hospital for the reception of the wounded. Tents were pitched; straw, fuel, water, blankets, etc., provided; hospital flag conspicuously hoisted; markers displayed at suitable points to indicate the route to the hospital; kitchen organized, and everything made ready for active usefulness. On the arrival of the wounded, the operating surgeons and their assistants took their places at the operating-tables in the rear of the medicine wagons, over which a fly had been spread, and where instruments, dressings, anesthetics, and stimulants were at hand.

One medical officer, usually the junior assistant surgeon, remained

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<sup>1</sup>. These men wore chevrons, half-chevrons, and cap-bands of green, as distinctive badges. — W. W. P.

with each regiment, together with a nurse or two and the hospital orderly, which latter carried a field companion supplied with dressings and other necessities; and these were ordered to establish themselves at temporary depots, at such distance in the rear of each regiment as would ensure safety to the wounded. Sometimes these temporary depots were consolidated into one or two for each brigade; especially was this plan considered more feasible when regiments were small. At these advance depots, the ambulances received the wounded for conveyance to division hospital, and, as fast as they were loaded and driven away, their places were supplied with others from the ambulance reserve, still farther in the rear. On the arrival of the ambulances at the hospital, the recorder made an entry of each case in a book provided for that purpose, stating name, rank, company, and regiment of the soldier, and the nature of the wound, together with any particulars of value to note. If an operation appeared to be required, the case was sent at once to the operating staff,—otherwise to the wards, and given in charge of a dresser. This record was further perfected to show the treatment, operation (if any), and the result or disposition of the case, daily reports therefrom being made to the medical director of the corps, and by him sent, with those of the other divisions, to the medical director of the army. And so the work went on in its busy round, until the wounded were all brought off the field, operations made, wounds dressed, patients fed, reports made up and sent in, and the wounded finally shipped to the depot hospitals at the army base. So complete was the working of this system, that, on several occasions after the severest battles, I have seen more than a thousand wounded cared for in one of these hospitals, the urgent operations made, and all the first attention rendered, within a few hours after the arrival of the first ambulance load.

These hospitals were subjected to a rigid system of inspection, both during action and at other times, not only by the medical inspectors of the corps, but also by medical inspectors from the headquarters of the army; so that it was almost impossible for affairs to go very wrong in their conduct. If, perchance, evils crept in, or inefficient officers obtained responsible places, they were of certain detection and swift remedy. The ambulance trains were also subjected to frequent and thorough inspections; the men were drilled and instructed in their duties, and everything pertaining to this important service constantly maintained at the highest possible standard of efficiency.

On the march, each division ambulance train followed immediately in the rear of the troops to which it belonged, and was accompanied by the permanent staff of the hospital, viz.: the surgeon-in-charge,



the executive officer, and the recorder. When a soldier was taken sick on the march, one of his regimental medical officers gave him an ambulance pass, which entitled him to make his way slowly along, or rest by the wayside until the train came up. One of the medical officers accompanying it examined the soldier and his pass, and, if proper, gave orders for his admission to an ambulance. On reaching the camp for the night, the sick and foot-sore thus gathered up were either returned to their regiments or retained in hospital, according to the nature and severity of the cases.

At the first battle of Fredericksburg, December 13th, 1862, the hospital of the Second Division, Sixth Army Corps, where I served as recorder, was located at the Bernard mansion,<sup>1</sup> a large stone house situated near the south bank of the Rappahannock river, about half a mile to the left of Franklin's Crossing. The owner, a haughty Virginian of the old school, had decamped with the Confederate forces on our approach, and so hasty had been the departure that the partly filled glasses and uncorked bottles of half-drunk wine, still standing on the dining-table and open side-board, attested to the convivial nature of his last night at home. It was understood at the time that several Confederate officers, including some of high rank, were partakers of Bernard's hospitality until a late hour that night, but, warned of the approach of the Union columns, host and guests hastily departed together, leaving behind them the tell-tale evidences of the night's hilarity. The house was comfortably, even luxuriously, furnished, and several fine pictures, together with other articles of taste and refinement, gave evidence of the wealth and culture of the late occupants. The next day, Bernard returned, but his behavior was so insolent that he was placed under guard, and subsequently sent to Washington, where he was given quarters in the Old Capitol Prison.

On the lawn in front of the house, where the tall trees lifted their stately forms majestically toward the heavens, were seen, during a temporary lull in the battle, a group of generals with their attendant staff-officers and orderlies. Conspicuous among the number was a young brigadier-general of cavalry, the gallant George D. Bayard. While conversing with Generals Franklin, Smith, and others, a solid shot, ricochetting across the field, struck him down, and he was brought into the hospital with a mortal wound, from the effects of which he expired twenty-four hours later. He was to have been married in five days more, it was said, to one of Philadelphia's fairest daughters. When it was finally decided to withdraw to the north bank of the river, the wounded of the Sixth

<sup>1</sup>. This house was subsequently burned, and an accurate illustration of the ruins, which I visited June, 1863, just before the Gettysburg campaign commenced, may be found in *The Century*, August, 1886, p. 637.—W. W. P.

Corps were removed to a temporary hospital near Falmouth. As soon as cars could be obtained, they were shipped to Acquia Creek, and thence by steamers to Washington. I was selected to accompany those from the Second Division, and reached Acquia Creek with them in charge about eight o'clock in the evening. Two steamers lying at anchor in the harbor were ordered to the wharf, and the transshipment to them was accomplished by three o'clock A. M. Washington was reached at seven in the morning, but it was not until three in the afternoon that the last of the wounded were loaded into ambulances, and on their way to the General Hospital. I had eaten nothing up to this time since leaving Falmouth, nearly twenty-four hours before, but the wounded were served with hot coffee and sandwiches at the Sixth-street wharf by the Sanitary Commission agents.

When I reached the camp of the Sixth Corps, near White Oak Church, on my return from Washington, I found awaiting me a pleasant surprise in the nature of a letter from Surgeon-General S. Oakley Vander Poel, S. N. Y., promoting me to be surgeon of the 57th Regiment N. Y. Volunteers, in the First Division of the Second Army Corps.

My service with the 49th Regiment and the Sixth Corps terminated upon the issuance of the following order :

	HEADQUARTERS LEFT GRAND DIVISION,	}
	CAMP NEAR WHITE OAK CHURCH, VA.	
SPECIAL ORDERS, }		December 27, 1862.
No. 35: }		

5. The following named officers, having tendered their resignations, are honorably discharged from the Military Service of the United States.

Assistant Surgeon WILLIAM W. POTTER, 49th N. Y. Vols., to enable him to accept a commission as surgeon of the 57th N. Y. Vols.

By Command of MAJOR-GENERAL FRANKLIN.

(Signed,) M. T. McMAHON,

*Major and A. A. A. General.*

This promotion afforded me an opportunity to pay a short visit home, my first absence from duty since entering the service. I was mustered in as surgeon at the War Department, in Washington, on the 22d of January, 1863, and reported to the regiment for duty on the 31st.

The 57th N. Y. Volunteers was then encamped above Falmouth, and was attached to the Third Brigade of the First Division of the

Second Army Corps. This division was then commanded by Major-General W. S. Hancock, who subsequently became famous as commander of the Second Army Corps. I had known General Hancock when he was a brigade commander in General Smith's Division of the Sixth Corps, as well as the members of his personal staff, who were still with him, and this acquaintance served me to a good purpose in my new relations about to commence.

We remained in camp near Falmouth, the troops doing picket duty along the Rappahannock, until the Chancellorsville campaign opened April 27th.

On the morning of Tuesday, April 28th, we marched at sunrise, and on the 30th crossed the river at United States Ford, bivouacking near Chancellorsville late that night.

At the battle of Chancellorsville, May 1st to 4th, the hospital of the First Division, Second Corps, was located in the woods, three-fourths of a mile in the rear of the Chancellor House, near the road leading to United States Ford. Here it was impracticable to even pitch the tents, for the position of the troops was so changeable, and the lines were so unstable that, besides the danger of the enemy's fire, there was the additional danger of possible capture; so the wounded were placed in rows upon blankets, the dry leaves gathered by the attendants, serving in the place of straw. Colonel Nelson A. Miles, 61st N. Y. Volunteers (now Brevet Major-General U. S. A.), was brought into this hospital with a supposed mortal wound. He was placed upon the table for examination, and, while the surgeons were thus engaged, a shell burst near by, killing the ambulance sergeant who brought the gallant Colonel off the field, and who was sitting on his horse intently watching the surgeons, anxiously awaiting the result, that he might take back to the front accurate information concerning the condition of his beloved commander. The wound proved less serious than was at first supposed, though the symptoms of collapse were alarming; nevertheless, this distinguished officer was spared to render valuable service afterward, both with the Army of the Potomac, where he rose to the command of a division, and in fighting the Indians on the plains since the close of the civil war; his record as a soldier having passed into history, while he is yet in the full vigor of his usefulness. On Monday, May 4th, a train of ambulances was loaded with wounded, and sent across the Rappahannock at United States Ford, onwards to Potomac Creek Hospital. I was sent in charge of the train, and delivered the wounded at the hospital the same night, remaining there on duty for two weeks afterwards. While en route we passed sufficiently near to witness Sedg-



wick's gallant fight at Bank's Ford,<sup>1</sup> the bursting of the shells above the tree-tops, in the gray twilight, making a brilliant, though destructive, pyrotechnic display.

At Gettysburg the hospital of the First Division was literally shelled out of its first position. The site was chosen early in the day on the 2d of July, soon after the arrival of the corps on the field, after its night's march from Taneytown. In the afternoon, while there was yet quietude along the whole line, I rode over to General Meade's headquarters on the Taneytown road, and, after making a short call, passed on to Cemetery Hill, to take a survey of the field from that point. Sweeping my glass towards the left, I saw the Third Corps, under Sickles, advancing in magnificent line of battle towards the Emmetsburg Pike. The day had been cloudy, with a misty rain a portion of the time; but now the clouds were breaking away, and, as the sunlight glinted on the burnished muskets and bright colors of the advancing host, a most beautiful and entrancing picture was presented to the view. Two general officers, Howard and Doubleday, were standing near by watching the scene intently, and when, presently, a white smoke was seen farther to the left, the latter exclaimed, "There, General, go the enemy's batteries," I began to realize, indeed, that the battle had opened. Returning to my post, I called again at headquarters; but in a few minutes the shells began to fill the air with their shrieking and hissing music, the location being such as to receive all long-range and stray projectiles. The fire soon grew so hot that everybody took to horse—generals, staff officers, orderlies, and escort, all left the place, but in the most quiet manner—Meade for the front, Pleasanton to look after his cavalry, and other officers to their various posts of duty. Meanwhile, I discovered that the first position of our hospital had become untenable, by reason of being in range of the enemy's fire, and a new location covered in by a hill, near a stream of water, had been selected. Here we remained until the battle was over, performing operations and attending to the wounded night and day, until all were finally cared for and removed to more permanent hospitals. General S. K. Zook, of the First Division, received a mortal wound on the evening of July 2d, and we sent him to a house near by. He survived less than twenty-four hours, and it was my sad duty to minister to his sufferings during this period.

During the battle of Gettysburg, the hospitals of the army, excepting those of the Twelfth Corps, were without their usual camp equipment, and, as a consequence, everything had to be improvised as best it could. Houses, barns, straw-stacks, and all available localities

<sup>1</sup> The Sixth Corps here literally cut its way through the enemy, and crossed to the north bank in the night.—W. W. P.

were seized upon; while even woods were, in many instances, the only protection obtainable. It appears that General Meade had given strict orders that no wagons should go to the front, excepting the hospital and ammunition trains, but the Chief Quartermaster had somehow failed to include the hospital trains in the exception, hence the embarrassment. When this was finally discovered, it was too late to rectify the mistake, and so we were obliged to improvise, as I have stated. Thus it came about that during the greatest battle of the war—certainly a pivotal battle—the wounded were subjected to greater privations, in many respects, than when we were fighting on the soil, which, by common consent, was designated the enemy's country. But they made no complaint, and, as the weather was warm, the suffering by this deprivation of usual shelter was reduced to a minimum. The Twelfth Corps, which somehow succeeded in evading the order about the trains, brought its hospital wagons up, and was thus enabled to carry on its hospital work more systematically.

On the 8th of August, 1863, while the Second Corps was encamped near Morrisville, Va., guarding some of the fords of the Rappahannock, east of the Orange & Alexandria railroad, the following order was issued, assigning me to the charge of the First Division Hospital:

HEADQUARTERS SECOND ARMY CORPS, }  
August 8, 1863. }

SPECIAL ORDERS, }  
No. 717. }

Surgeon W. W. POTTER, 57th N. Y. Volunteers, is hereby detailed to the command of the hospital of the First Division, Second Corps relieving Surgeon *George L. Potter*, who, on being thus relieved, will report to his regimental commander without delay.

By Order of BRIGADIER-GENERAL CALDWELL.

(Signed,) JOHN HANCOCK,  
*Assistant Adjutant-General.*

I continued upon this duty until mustered out of service, and the remainder of this memoir will be devoted to an account of service in that capacity.

During the succeeding few months the army was engaged in a campaign of manœuvres, extending from Mitchell's Station back to Centerville, then out to the Rappahannock again; finally across the Rapidan to Mine Run, and thence back to Winter quarters, between those two rivers, with the headquarters of the army near Brandy Station. During this period, hospital work consisted chiefly in receiving and caring for the sick on the march, as we had comparatively few wounded to provide for, and we were practically an ambulance or flying hospital. In the retrograde movement to Centerville in

October, however, the First Division, under General Caldwell, covered the rear the last day, October 14th, when there was some sharp work, culminating, just at nightfall, in the battle at Bristoe Station. During the day we were once or twice in precarious positions, our hospital train narrowly escaping capture at Auburn, in the early morning. I was obliged, also, on this occasion to provide for the cavalry wounded, besides my own, and, after the fight at Bristoe, all were taken to Centerville, where we arrived late at night. Being short of medical officers, I was compelled to make some urgent operations in the night, with only one surgical assistant; the hospital steward and nurses were, however, utilized to advantage, and all were cared for before morning. Next day all our wounded were sent to Fairfax Station for shipment to Washington, and we were again ready for the forward movement, which soon commenced.

All were cared for, did I say? No! Not all. One poor fellow, just returned from General Hospital, where he had been for months, was wounded that day by a shell, which shattered his right leg and left forearm at one fell swoop. He was placed in an ambulance and brought up to Centerville that night, but he was so low from shock that we dared not remove him therefrom, and so fed him with brandy and beef stock in the ambulance until morning, a nurse being specially detailed for that purpose. When daylight came he was still too feeble to go upon the operating table, and so was watched and fed until the order came to move in the afternoon of the 15th. Something now must be done, the order to move was imperative, and the wounded were all loaded into the ambulances, to go to Fairfax Station. Hastily summoning the Medical Director of the Corps, Dr. A. N. Dougherty, of Newark, N. J., now deceased, we determined, upon consultation, that the only proper way was to amputate. One ambulance was kept to receive this man, and the others were allowed to depart en train to the railroad station. A shower had now arisen, and all shelter had been struck and loaded in the wagons, so, while four men held a rubber blanket over us for protection from the rain, I made the double consecutive amputations of his right thigh and left arm, and placed him in the waiting ambulance with a special nurse and stimulants, to follow the remainder of the train to Fairfax. He recovered and wrote me afterward from General Hospital in Washington. His name is Frank Rose, private Co. D., 57th N. Y. Volunteers, and the case is recorded in the Medical and Surgical History of the War of the Rebellion,—the arm amputation in Part II., surgical volume, p. 711, and the thigh amputation in Part III., surgical volume, p. 253.



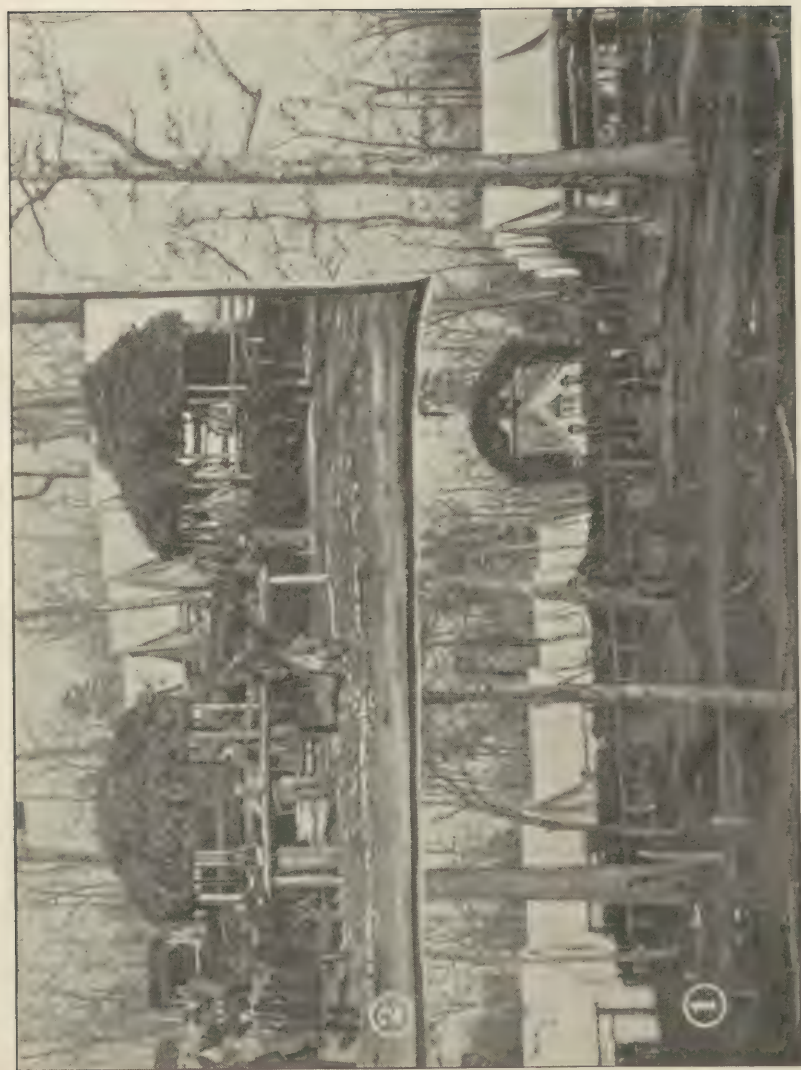
This incident is mentioned to show the exigencies of the service, and how even extreme surgical emergencies must be subordinated to the inexorable demands of military necessities; and, further, to show how, even under the most unpromising conditions and adverse circumstances, surgical work may turn to success,—how lives on the field were sometimes snatched from the very jaws of death.

At the Mine Run affair, in the last days of November, we only employed the ambulance hospitals in the Second Corps, as we had but few wounded, and they, for the most part, were only slight cases. The weather was bitter cold, and the only comfort to be derived from the movement was its brief duration. On our return to the north side of the Rapidan, every one felt that campaigning was over for the Winter, and we soon settled into the hum-drum ways of every day camp life. Orders were soon issued for the preparation of more permanent hospitals, and a site was selected for those of the Second Corps in a piece of woods situated about a mile from Brandy Station, on the road to Stevensburg. Trees were felled, ground cleared, and tents pitched for the three hospitals of the corps, which were arranged side by side in their numerical order, that of the First Division being on the right.

It so happened that within the lines of the First Division were two saw-mills, situated upon a stream that flowed along the camps, and which furnished the power to run them. They were immediately put in order by the Chief Quartermaster of the division, logs were cut and hauled by the soldiers, who enjoyed this diversion from ordinary military duties, and, by working the mills night and day, sufficient lumber was soon obtained to make the cantonments of the entire corps very comfortable. The hospitals received the first supply, next the enlisted men, and lastly, the officers; so that by the middle of January, 1864, the camps began to assume quite a home-like air.

The hospitals were laid out in streets, with a double row of tents on each side, facing inwards, and the quarters of the Surgeon-in-Charge located at the head of the street, facing south. A separate cot was provided for each patient in this wise: four crotched posts were driven into the ground, one at each of the four corners of the bed; a firm stick rested in the crotches across the head and foot, on which were placed small springy poles cut from straight saplings, extending lengthwise of the bed, and as close together as they could lie; a bed-sack filled with straw, a pillow, warm blankets, and clean white sheets, served to equip a very comfortable bed. The aisles, as well as the spaces between each cot, were floored; spacious fire-places were con-





INCIDENTS OF THE WAR.

- (1). FIRST DIVISION HOSPITAL, SECOND ARMY CORPS, NEAR BRANDY STATION, VA., SURGEON W. W. POTTER, IN CHARGE.
- (2). SECOND DIVISION HOSPITAL, SECOND ARMY CORPS, NEAR BRANDY STATION, VA., SURGEON JOHN AIKEN, IN CHARGE.

From Photographs by A. Gardner, Washington, D. C., taken in March, 1864.



structed in the rear end of each ward; and sidewalks built on both sides of the streets, and elsewhere about the camp, as convenience required. This may seem, as described, a crude and rough place for the care of the sick, to one not familiar with army life; but civilians, who visited these hospitals, were surprised and gratified to find them both cheerful and comfortable. It was, moreover, a matter of experience that recoveries were more prompt, not to say more certain, when the soldiers who were disabled by curable diseases, were treated in field hospitals, surrounded by comrades who had a personal interest in their welfare, and ministered unto by their own surgeons. The hygienic surroundings, too, were usually superior to those of large general hospitals, and, besides, the sick treated in tents have an incomparable advantage in being able to obtain plenty of fresh air without the dangers of a draught. [See illustrations.]

A special supply of fresh oysters, milk, and crackers, brought daily from Washington, together with other obtainable comforts and luxuries, contributed much to the welfare and contentment of the sick; while the presence of a bright, cheery, and faithful woman nurse,<sup>1</sup> who also presided over the special diet kitchen, aided not a little to make the service of the hospital more effectually successful. The wounded from Morton's Ford, February 6, 1864, instead of being sent to Washington after the first attention, were distributed to these three division hospitals, where all the operations were made, and where they were kept until recovery or other termination of the cases occurred.

Early in January, 1864, General Meade issued orders permitting officers who so desired, to invite their wives, mothers, or sisters, to visit the army for a limited period and something like 4,000 ladies availed themselves of this privilege, during the Winter and early Spring. A large music hall was built at General Caldwell's headquarters, (First Division, Second Corps,) which was in almost nightly use for concerts, hops, lectures, and other social gatherings. Grace Greenwood (Mrs. Lippincott) paid us a visit during the course of the season, and favored us with three or four of her characteristic "talks," which always bristled with wit, wisdom, and genuine loyalty. The frequent visits of many of these ladies to the hospitals, and their kind and cheery words to the sick, will long be remembered by both those who were the recipients and those who witnessed their beneficial

1. Miss Cornelia Hancock, who also rendered good service afterwards in the base hospitals at Fredericksburg and City Point. This deserving woman has rendered distinguished service on several occasions during dire disaster since the war—notably, at Charleston, S. C., after the earthquake, and more recently at Johnstown, Pa., after the flood.—W. W. P.

effects, as a bright oasis in the desert-like expanse of war's dreadful arena.

In the latter days of April the unrecovered sick of the army were sent to Washington, surplus baggage and camp equipage sent to the rear, and everything put in readiness for an active campaign, which actually began on the 3d of May. The campaign equipment of the First Division Hospital consisted of twenty-two hospital tents, forty-three ambulances, fourteen army wagons to carry supplies, and five Autenreith medicine wagons. We had thirty-six hospital attendants under charge of a ward-master, a chief hospital steward, and a chief cook. Other hospital stewards, nurses, cooks, and attendants were supplied as occasion required.

The organization of the hospital staff, at the opening of the campaign, was as follows :

Surgeon W. W. POTTER, *57th N. Y. Volunteers*, In Charge.

Surgeon CHARLES S. HOYT, *39th N. Y. Volunteers*, Executive Officer.

Assistant Surgeon P. M. PLUNKETT, *2d Delaware Volunteers*, Recorder.

Lieutenant BURKHARDT, *60th A. Y. Volunteers*, Acting Assistant Commissary of Subsistence

Dr. Plunkett was mustered out July 2, 1864, by reason of expiration of term of service, and his place was filled by the appointment of Assistant Surgeon J. C. Norris, *81st Pa. Volunteers*. The division consisted of four brigades—one more than the usual number—and, consequently, our necessities were proportionately larger in the way of hospital equipment. Each brigade was allowed one medicine wagon of the Autenreith pattern, and I had one for my own operating uses, in which I also carried supplies to issue to the others in case of emergency, making five in all, as I have above stated.

During the Winter, Dr. Letterman had been, at his own request, relieved from duty as Medical Director of the Army of the Potomac, and Surgeon T. A. McParlin, U. S. A., appointed in his stead. Dr. McParlin proceeded to carry out the wise provisions of his predecessor's administration, and his orders at the opening of the campaign evinced a knowledge of the magnitude and responsibilities of his position, which gave him, at once, the confidence and support of the medical staff of the army, and which strengthened as the campaign progressed.

In the battle of the Wilderness, where we remained from the 4th to the 7th of May, we obtained native ice the first day, taken from an ice-house near the lines, which General Francis C. Barlow, then com-



INCIDENTS OF THE WAR.

THIRD DIVISION HOSPITAL, SECOND ARMY CORPS, NEAR BRANDY STATION, VA., SURGEON F. A. DUDLEY, IN CHARGE.

From a Photograph by A. Gardner, Washington, D. C., taken in March, 1864.





manding the First Division, with his characteristic thoughtfulness for the welfare of his wounded, ordered seized and sent to the hospital. From this time until we reached the lines before Petersburg, we had liberal supplies of native ice wherever we established our hospital.

We moved towards Spottsylvania on the night of the 7th; were at Todd's Tavern on the 8th and 9th; at the River Po on the 10th; and at Spottsylvania from the 11th to the 19th. The hospital was located near Cossins's from the 11th to the 14th, where its capacity was taxed to the uttermost, more than 1,000 wounded having been received before noon of the 12th. General Barlow sent the Division band to the hospital on the 13th, to give a concert for the wounded, which cheered the men very much, as it was the first music we had been permitted to enjoy since crossing the Rapidan. The wounded of the Second Corps were sent to Fredericksburg on the 11th and 13th, numbering at both shipments 2,923, in 133 ambulances, and 258 army wagons. The First Division Hospital sent 450 on the 11th; and had still 950 for shipment on the 13th. We spent most of the night of the 13th in this work, and after exhausting all our transportation, both ambulances and army wagons, daylight found us with about 200 still on hand.<sup>1</sup>

The movement of the corps to the left, during the night of the 13th, uncovered our position at Cossins's, and rendered a like movement of the hospital necessary; so we left the remaining wounded, supplied with the necessary medical officers, rations, and hospital supplies, to fall into the enemy's hands.<sup>2</sup> I left the place on the 14th, after completing all arrangements for their care, and soon after my departure the enemy's cavalry, under Rosser, came in, capturing all hospital attendants who wore no distinctive badge, and carrying off the greater part of the rations which had been left for the wounded. The Confederate wounded, who were left behind, were also removed to their own lines by the troopers. A force from the Second Corps was sent to drive away the marauders, but they were off before our troops arrived. Sadly enough, Surgeon Thomas Jones, 8th Pa. Reserves, left with the wounded of the Fifth Corps, similarly abandoned, was killed by one of our own soldiers, who, in the darkness, mistook him for a guerilla. On the 16th, just at evening, a train of ambulances,

1. This was, indeed, a most trying night and the permanent staff could be seen, with lanterns in hand, superintending the loading of the wagons during all those weary hours, with the mud overfoot, and the rain still falling. I presume Dr. Hoyt, the then Executive Officer, who is now Secretary of the New York State Board of Charities, should his eye meet this, will remember the occasion vividly. General Francis A. Walker, Assistant Adjutant-General of the Second Corps, who was then an inmate of my own tent, as a guest for a week, by reason of an injury received on the morning of the assault at the salient, May 12th, will, I am sure, recall the scene.—W. W. P.

2. This was done under orders from army headquarters.—W. W. P.

protected by Gibbon's Division, went to Cossins's and brought in the wounded from all the abandoned hospitals, together with the stores, tents, and attendants still remaining. After being fed and dressed, the wounded were sent to Fredericksburg.

At Cold Harbor, the Tyler House<sup>1</sup> on the left was first selected as our hospital site, but, as the military authorities deemed it unsafe, the tents were pitched in a field farther to the right, near army headquarters. Here we remained during the heaviest part of the battle, from the 2d to the 4th of June, where we cared for more than 1,000 wounded in our hospital. The dead bodies of three brigade commanders were brought to the First Division Hospital here, viz.: Colonel O. H. Morris, 66th N. Y.; Colonel H. B. McKeon, 81st Pa., and Colonel Peter A. Porter, 8th N. Y. H. Artillery, where they were embalmed and sent North. Colonel McKeon fell between the lines, and his body could not be recovered until after night-fall, when volunteers were called for, who brought it off.

On the 5th we moved the hospital to the Tyler House, where it was originally intended to establish it, the lines now having been sufficiently extended to protect that position. We were now about two miles from Gaines's mill, the scene of Porter's great battle of two years before, which was now within the enemy's line. Here the tents were pitched on a beautiful lawn facing an avenue of locusts of ancient lineage, leading from the road to the house, a distance of some twenty rods. The Recorder's office, hospital commissary, and officers' mess were established in the house, which afforded conveniences for these important departments, so essential to the successful conduct of our hospital. A well-filled ice-house supplied us liberally with ice during the week we remained there, but it was completely emptied by the end of that time. Our mess was made up of the members of the permanent staff of the hospital, the five ambulance officers of the division, and the hospital commissary of subsistence; and during engagements I always invited the operating staff to join us, which they gladly did, as their own messes were temporarily disrupted. There was always a unity of feeling between the hospital staff and the ambulance officers in the First Division, and each department enjoyed the confidence and received the support of the other.

On Sunday, June 12th, preparations were made for the movement to the James river. The sick and wounded were sent to White House, the hospital packed up, and by night-fall we were on our way

1. The property of the late Dr. Tyler, a relative of ex-President Tyler. The owner died two years before, while the army under McClellan was occupying the Cold Harbor region.—W. W. P.



to participate in the plan recommended by McClellan in 1862, which the army was about to take up, namely, to attack Richmond and the rebel host from the South, via Petersburg. Fifteen ambulances and one medicine wagon accompanied each division; the remainder of the hospital train, consisting of ambulances, medicine wagons, and army wagons joining the supply trains and moving with them. The James river was crossed on a pontoon bridge, at Wilcox's landing, near Fort Powhatan.<sup>1</sup> The supply trains, having in some manner obtained the right of way over the bridge, delayed the crossing of the medical train from early morning until late in the afternoon of the 16th, so that it did not reach the front until between nine and ten o'clock that night. Meanwhile, a battle was in progress, the Second Corps having made an assault at six o'clock in the evening, and Medical Director Dougherty had selected sites for the hospitals; but nothing further could be done, excepting to build arbors and prepare the ground, until the wagons arrived. This was the first time during the campaign that the hospitals had not been fully prepared for the reception of wounded in advance of the necessity, and this was without fault of the medical department. Tents, however, were pitched, the wounded brought in, food prepared, and serious cases attended to; the hospital staff, ambulance corps, and attendants working hard all night with energy and alacrity for humanity's sake. By noon of the 17th, the First Division Hospital had received over 1,000 wounded, the third time this had happened since the opening of the campaign, the two other instances having been at Spottsylvania and Cold Harbor.

Mrs. General Barlow, who had been with us a few days at the Tyler House, visited us again at this point, and was kept busy in preparing milk-punch, which she administered to the wounded with her own hands. This philanthropic woman yielded up her life to her country's cause, breathing it out a month hence, from fatal disease contracted in her efforts to alleviate the suffering of wounded soldiers. The campaign thus far had been almost a perpetual battle from the Rapidan to Petersburg, taxing the energies and endurance of the medical staff and the ambulance service to an extreme degree; but they had not been found wanting, and, notwithstanding the unusual hardships of the campaign, had met every demand made upon them in a spirit of cheerful obedience to duty, and with a promptitude amidst many difficulties that were, oftentimes, well-nigh overwhelming. I would not wish to make, at this time, invidious distinctions where all worked so well and faithfully, but a few men, besides the hospital staff proper, were a tower of strength to me during this trying campaign.

1. The river is nearly a mile in width at this point.—W. W. P.

The never-tiring and always amiable Medical Director of the corps, Dr. A. N. Dougherty, was ever ready with advice and timely aid; General Francis C. Barlow, a martinet in discipline and a brave and capable field commander, always manifested the kindest interest in the hospital, granting every request consistent with military exigency to render it efficient; Dr. D. H. Houston, Surgeon-in-Chief; Dr. J. W. Wishart, Chief Operator, and Dr. A. Vander Veer, Surgeon of the 66th N. Y. Volunteers, were among my confidential advisers and able coadjutors in the work. These, and others whom I should be glad to mention by name, did space permit, contributed in an inestimable degree to whatever of success my administration of the First Division Hospital may have attained.

The operations before Petersburg soon began to partake of the nature of a siege, and the hospitals, likewise, began to assume a more permanent mien. At the Burchard House, on the Norfolk & Petersburg stage road, where the First Division Hospital located itself sometime in July, ovens were built, cots erected, and many of the comforts of Winter quarters provided. Purchases of fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs, milk, etc., were made from the hospital fund; ice was obtained from City Point, and many other luxuries were likewise added to the ordinary army supplies that served to improve the efficiency of our work. A portion of the family, with a few servants, still occupied the house and premises, but Mr. Burchard himself, who was the father-in-law of the Confederate General Dearing, was absent in Petersburg, whither he went with Mrs. Dearing just before our forces appeared. The establishment of our lines on the 16th of June cut off his return, and he was thus compelled to remain away until Petersburg fell, in April, 1865.

Several expeditionary movements were made by the Second Army Corps, while the Army of the Potomac was besieging Petersburg. One of the first of these was to Deep Bottom, on the James river, which began on the evening of July 26th, and which had for its objective the diversion of a sufficient force of the enemy away from his works to enable the Ninth Corps to make an assault, with increased chances of success, after the explosion of its famous mine, that was now about completed. Another object in the movement was to move on Richmond from the north side of the James river, in case it should be found feasible to do so. The first division took fifteen ambulances on this expedition, and sufficient material to conduct a flying hospital. We crossed the James river before dawn, on the 27th, and captured a battery of four twenty-pounder Parrott guns at sunrise. We remained

in observation until the dark of the 29th, when our wounded were shipped by steamer, and the corps returned to the Petersburg lines in time to witness the explosion of the mine on the morning of the 30th, though, happily, none of our troops were engaged in the assault.

We reestablished our hospital at the Burchard house, where we remained until the 12th of August, when we once more moved to Deep Bottom. The hospital train crossed the river on the same bridges as before, and established itself on the north bank. Here we remained from the 14th to the 20th of August, during which time there was much spirited fighting, and we had many wounded to care for, among whom was Captain James C. Bronson, 57th New York Volunteers. Captain Bronson was doing staff duty with the Third Brigade, when he received a wound of the right forearm that rendered amputation necessary. I cared for him in my own quarters from the 14th to the 20th, when we were ordered to ship our wounded by steamers, and again prepare to retrace our steps to our old position. The morning of August 21st found us once more at the Burchard house, but we moved the same day to the left, to assist Warren's Fifth Corps in securing the Weldon railroad, and finally brought up, on the 25th, at Reams' Station. The 26th found us still again at the Burchard house; and this time we remained comparatively quiet for some time. The movement to Hatcher's Run, in October, temporarily disrupted the hospital, but it was again established at the Burchard house, and substantially occupied the site during the late Fall and Winter, even until the final campaign, in the early Spring of 1865.

Colonel James A. Beaver,<sup>1</sup> 148th Pa., who lost a leg at Reams' Station, August 25th, was quartered in this house until his recovery. After the amputation, which was made in the temporary hospital on the field, he was brought hither on a stretcher, a distance of over eight miles, by a detail of sixteen men.<sup>2</sup> Here he was faithfully nursed by Miss Gilson, niece of the Hon. Mr. Fay, of Chelsea, Mass., a prominent member of the United States Sanitary Commission. Mr. Fay, himself, was also a frequent visitor to the hospital, contributing time and means to the alleviation of the suffering sick and wounded, here and elsewhere throughout the army.

Both the Sanitary and Christian Commissions rendered efficient service to the hospital inmates during the overland campaign, as well

1. Afterward Brevet Brigadier-General U. S. Volunteers, and now Governor of Pennsylvania.—W. W. P.

2. A similar service was rendered to General Sickles, at Gettysburg, the same night of the amputation, July 2d. A detail of forty soldiers carried him to Westminster, a distance of twenty-five miles. I have no doubt both these lives were saved by this expedient.—W. W. P.



as at other times, furnishing supplies of lemons, oranges, shirts, drawers, and other useful articles, besides rendering personal attention to individual cases, writing and mailing letters, and doing a variety of other work which cannot be specified, but which economized the time of the already overworked medical staff and attendants, on many occasions.

The large base hospitals established at Fredericksburg, Port Royal, White House, and City Point, under the charge of Surgeon E. B. Dalton, U. S. Volunteers, were an important part of the hospital system of the Army of the Potomac, and are worthy of more than a passing reference; so, too, of the railway and steamboat transportation of the wounded; but this article has already reached its limits, and the distinctive features of field-hospital service which was its purpose to present, have already been set forth.

From the 3d of May to the 19th of September, 1864, the First Division Hospital register contained the names of between 7,000 and 8,000 sick and wounded, who had been cared for during that period. Many of these were slight cases that recovered in a few days, more or less, and were returned to duty. If they had been at once sent beyond the Field Hospital to the General Hospitals, in the North, they would not have returned for several months, if at all. In this way, alone, the division system of hospital organization exhibited an economic value of no mean proportions.

The post of the surgeon in action has erroneously been supposed by many to be free from danger. The records of the Surgeon General's office, at Washington, show that during the late war thirty-two medical officers were killed in battle, or by guerrillas, or partisans; nine killed by accident; and eighty-three wounded in action, of whom ten died. This is believed to be a casualty list proportionately larger than that of any other staff corps. Three medical officers were killed at the battle of Antietam, one of whom, Surgeon W. J. H. White, U. S. A. Medical Director of the Sixth Corps, was the first officer killed in Franklin's command in that battle. On the 10th of May, 1864, at the engagement at the River Po, Surgeon A. N. Dougherty, U. S. Volunteers, Medical Director of the Second Corps, than whom there was no braver or more efficient officer in the medical staff of the army, was wounded by a shell while superintending the affairs of his department. These instances are cited to show that even medical officers of the higher grades were often exposed to the greatest dangers.

As an interesting final fact, showing the importance of the care of the sick and wounded of an army from another standpoint, it is ascertained from carefully compiled financial tables, also derived from the Surgeon General's office, that the total money cost of the maintenance of the Medical Department of the army from 1861 to 1865, exclusive of the salaries of officers, was something over forty-seven and one-third millions of dollars. Surely a republic that dealt so generously with its soldiers who suffered from the casualties of war in its defense, cannot justly be charged with neglectfulness, indifference, or ingratitude.







